

Mission Statement: The mission of the College of Communication and the Arts is to impart knowledge and understanding of the human communication process within the context of a Judeo-Christian worldview and to help students to develop advanced critical thinking and communication skills.

**Regent University
School of Communication & the Arts**

**Syllabus
Summer 2008**

COM 703 MAT: Research Methods: Qualitative Methodologies

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Class hours: June 9 – June 13.
Office hours: Tuesday – Thursday (4:00—5:00)

Course Description

Ethnography entails the examination and careful study of people and the group or cultural context within which they live. Typically, ethnographic studies are on a small scale involving prolonged, intimate and detailed contact between the ethnographer and the person or group he or she is studying. Such study comprises both description and interpretation and hence crosses the gap between “science” and the “humanities.” This advanced level ethnography course is designed to acquaint students with the theoretical and practical challenges and problems inherent in the ethnographic enterprise.

Ethnography, by its very nature, entails intimate involvement with the “other.” In keeping with the current “postmodern” milieu, it is this very involvement which will form the focus of this course as each student explores the ways in which the “other” can be engaged and described without “undue” exploitation. Thus, issues of ethics, ideology, hegemony, respect, authority, identity, freedom and openness will play a vital role in each student’s engagement with the “other.”

Central to this research methodology is the placing of ethnographic analysis within a larger theoretical discourse. Hence, the importance placed on both “grounded theory” and a theoretical perspective, which can enrich and enlarge the potential insights operating in a specific research project. Thus, each student will be strongly encouraged to pursue and investigate specific “social science” and “interpretive” theories as they apply to their project.

As a graduate level course designed for students from a variety of backgrounds and academic experience each student is free to choose any subject for their ethnographic project, especially as it relates to his or her academic and professional interests. However, in light of the brief and intense nature of this class each student will be given the opportunity to work on a project with the professor. For those choosing this option they will also be given the opportunity to participate in writing an article or a chapter for a book using an ethnographic approach to research.

While there are several types of qualitative research this class will focus primarily on ethnographic research. However, every attempt will be made to incorporate into the class examples and instruction on several other kinds of qualitative research.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course will offer an equal emphasis on theory and practice with the aim of helping each student come to appreciate both the experiential and theoretical dimensions of the ethnographic act. At the end of this course the attentive student should be able to:

- A. ...recognize and be sensitive to the problems and challenges inherent in engaging, describing, and interpreting the "other" who forms the center of his or her ethnographic "text."
- B. ...be conversant with some of the key thinkers and theorist of ethnography and its discourse, theory and practice.
- C. ...be reasonably proficient in the speaking, listening, observing, note taking, and interviewing skills required of ethnographers.
- D. ...analyze, interpret, and "write up" ethnographic data in terms of a given methodological and/or theoretical perspective.

TEXTBOOKS: REQUIRED:

- Duneier, M. (2000). *Sidewalk*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. of Chicago Press.
- Goodall, H. L. (2000). *Writing the New Ethnography*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press
- Knowles, J. G. & Cole, A. L. (2008). *Handbook of the Arts in qualitative research: Perspectives, methodologies, examples, and issues*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Pink, S. (2007). *Doing visual ethnography* (2ed ed). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

TEXTBOOKS: RECOMMENDED

- Atkinson, R. (2002). *The life story interview*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry & research design*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Denzin, N. K. (1997). *Interpretive ethnographic practices for the 21st century*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Denzin, N. K., & Linclon, Y. S. (2005). *The sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc
- Duneier, M. (1994). *Slim's table: race, respectability, and masculinity*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Emmison, M. & Smith, P. (2002) *Researching the visual*. . Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Publications

- Erickson, K. & Stull, D. (1998). *Doing team ethnography: warnings and advice*. (Vol. 42). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Fetterman, D. M. (1989). *Ethnography step by step*. (2ed ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Geertz, C. (1983). *Local knowledge: further essays in interpretive anthropology*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Miles, M. B. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. (2nd edition). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Pink, S. (2004). *Working images; visual research and representation in ethnography*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Savill-Torike, M. (2003). *The ethnography of communication: An introduction*. (3rd edition). New York, NY: Blackwell Publishers.
- VanMaahen, J. (1988). *Tales of the field: On writing ethnography*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Weiss, R. S. (1995). *Learning from strangers*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Because of the brief and intense nature of this course, it is critical that all assignments be completed on time.

A. All required reading must be read and “digested” before the class period they are due. Because this class meets for only five days **you need to read the texts before the first class period**. Although we will be discussing the readings from the texts during the formal meeting times there is not enough time for you to read all the material assigned if you wait until the week of formal class meetings to read the material.

B. Each student will orally present two written abstracts dealing with ethnographic theory and/or practice or a particular social science or “interpretive” theory which can increase our sensitivity to the operative dynamics entailed in ethnographic projects. The abstracts can be based on an article from a scholarly journal or chapter from a scholarly book (including chapters from our text, *Handbook of the Arts in qualitative research* by Knowles and Cole). The recommended readings are intended to stimulate thinking in this regard. The instructor must approve all abstracts.

C. Each student will conduct two “short” ethnographic field exercises and write up their response to this experience. Such exercises will include but not be limited to observational studies, dialogue transcriptions, open-ended interview, data analysis, participant observation and informant interaction experiences, etc. The professor will assign the topics for this assignment the week we meet on campus.

D. Each student will submit, for class critique, a proposal for their major ethnographic project. Such a proposal will include a brief “literature review,” justification for the project, proposed methodological approach to the subject and any relevant theoretical possibilities.

E. Each student must submit a twenty to twenty-five page paper based on their proposal and major ethnographic project. Such projects will include, a “literature review,” methodology section, analysis and interpretation of observational data and interview transcriptions, and any applicable theoretical orientation. All papers must follow the MLA or APA guidelines.

COURSE EVALUATION:

In-class discussion and participation 20%

Abstracts and presentations 10%

Short ethnographic field exercises 20%

Final paper 50%

COURSE SCHEDULE

June 11

Topics – Introduction

Readings: Patton, M. Q. *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Chapters 1-4
Duneier, M. *Sidewalk*.

June12

Topics – Fieldwork

Readings: Patton, M. Q. *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Chapters 5-7
Goddall, H. L. *Writing the new ethnography*.

June 13

Topics – Analysis

Readings: Patton, M. Q. *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Chapters 8-9
Pink, S. *Doing visual ethnography*.

JUNE 14

Topics: --Writing

Readings: Knowles, J. G. & Cole, A. L. *Handbook of the arts in qualitative research*.

JUNE 15

Topics: Paper Proposal

Integration of Faith and Learning

To begin this section on the integration of faith and learning, we would like to refer to a brief comment made by John Courtney Murray, given at the inaugural series of St. Thomas More Lectures at Yale University. This class, as Father Murray reminds us,

raises the question of the uniqueness of our subject matter and the problem of God amid the whole range of problems that we face.

If God is a reality, his reality is unique; it will therefore present to man a unique problem. The problem of God exhibits only the barest analogy with the standard model of a problem as it is found in science. In the scientific world of observation and inference, hypothesis and verification, the data are, as it were, "out there." The scientist is distant and detached from them; other things being equal any number of men who are scientists can do the same experiment and record the same results. No personal issues arise in the scientific problem. In contrast, the problem of God is primary among the fateful human questions that, as Pascal said, "take us by the throat." The whole man--is profoundly engaged both in the position of the problem and its solution. In fact, he is in a real sense a datum of the problem itself, and his solution of it has personal consequences that touch every aspect of his conduct, character, and consciousness. Moreover, the problem of God is unique in that no man may say of it, "It is not my problem." Dostoevski's challenge is valid: "If God is not, everything is permitted." But the challenge needs to be amended to include, "except one thing." If God is not, no one is permitted to say or even think that he is, for this would be a monstrous deception of oneself and of others. It would be to cherish and propagate a pernicious illusion whose result would necessarily be the destruction of man. On the other hand, if God is, again one thing is not permitted. It is not permitted that any man should be ignorant of him, for this ignorance, too, would be the destruction of man. On both counts, therefore, no man may say that the problem of God is not his problem.

Murray, J. C. (1964). *The problem of God*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

As indicated by the quotation above the issues raised in this class speak to the whole of our life not just the academic. We cannot divorce the sacred from the secular, one's heart from one's mind, or the God of reason from the God of history.

Furthermore, we engage the content of this class as communication scholars looking at theology and not as theologians looking at communication. By this we mean that you are to respond to questions raised in the class or to specific class assignments as a communication scholar speaking or writing to other scholars in the field. Although the professor provides a framework or structure for the class it is the responsibility of the student to integrate the subject matter of the class into their own worldview.

Incomplete Grades

It is University policy that incomplete grades are to be given only for legitimate deficiencies due to severe illness or emergencies or other significant reasons acceptable to the professor and not because of neglect on the student's part. I cannot deviate from this policy. Please consult the Regent University Academic Catalogue for a more complete statement of university policy.

Academic Honesty

As should be expected, particularly at a Christian university, students will adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. This includes the avoidance of plagiarism, defined as the uses of written and oral words of another person, including another student, without the expressed acknowledgment of the speaker's or writer's indebtedness to that person. This also applies to the use of papers and other materials previously submitted to instructors of other classes, either at Regent University or other institutions. Any violation of this policy will normally result in failure of the course.

Student Feedback

You will be given the opportunity to provide me, as well as the college administration, with written feedback and to evaluate the course structure and its conduct. However, you should feel free to bring any concerns to my attention at any time during the semester. We welcome your input, feedback and constructive criticism on this course.

This syllabus is subject to change without notice. Updated: March 31, 2008

**TEXTS RECOMMENDED:
COM 703 Qualitative Research**

- Ang, Ien. "Culture and Communication: Towards an Ethnographic Critique of Media Consumption in the Transnational Media System." European Journal of Communication. 5. 1990: 239-260.
- Bauman, Richard. Story, Performance, and Event: Contextual Studies of Oral Narrative. New York: Cambridge UP, 1986.
- . Verbal Art as Performance. Prospect Heights, Ill: Waveland Press, 1984, c1977.
- Ben-Amos, Dan and Kenneth S. Goldstein. Eds. Folklore: Performance and Communication. The Hague: Mouton, 1975.
- Bird, S. Elizabeth. "Travels in Nowhere Land: Ethnography and the 'Impossible' Audience." Critical Studies in Mass Communication. 9. 1992: 250-260.
- Bower, Gordon H. and Randolph K. Cirilo. "Cognitive Psychology and Text Processing." In Handbook of Discourse Analysis. Vol. One: Disciplines of Discourse. Ed. Teun A. Van Dijk. New York: Academic Press, 1975.
- Bowman, Barbara, Garda W. Bowman, and Ruth C. Resch. "Humanizing the Research Interview: A Posthumous Analysis of LeRoy Bowman's Approach to the Interviewing Process." Quality and Quantity. 18. 1984: 159-171.
- Brodkey, Linda. "Writing Ethnographic Narratives." Written Communication. 4. 1987: 25-50.
- Clifford, James. Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1988.
- Conquergood, Dwight. "Rethinking Ethnography: Towards a Critical Cultural Politics." Communication Monographs. 58. 1991: 179-194.
- Dijkstra, Wil. "Interviewing Style and Respondent Behavior: An Experimental Study of the Survey Interview." Sociological Methods & Research. 16. 1987: 309-334.
- Ellen, R.F. Ethnographic Research: A Guide to General Conduct. New York: Academic Press, 1984.
- Ellis, C. & Bochner, A. P. (1996). *Composing Ethnography*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Emerson, R. M., Fritx, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (1995). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago:IL. University of Chicago Press.

- Fine, Elizabeth C. and Jean Haskell Speer. Performance, Culture, and Identity. Westport, CONN: Praeger, 1992.
- Fitzgerald, Thomas K. "Media and Changing Metaphors of Ethnicity and Identity." Media, Culture and Society. Vol. 13. 1991: 193-214.
- Geertz, Clifford. Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology. Basic Books, 1983.
- Graesser, Arthur C. and Leslie F. Clark. "Constructing Structures During Narrative Prose Comprehension." Structures and Procedures of Implicit Knowledge. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing , 1985.
- Mishler, E.G. Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986.
- Morrissey, Charles T. "Riding a Mule Through the 'Terminological Jungle': Oral History and Problems of Nomenclature." Oral History Review. 12. 1984: 13-28.
- O'Flaherty, Wendy Doniger. Other People's Myths: The Cave of Echoes. New York: Macmillan, 1988.
- Paredes, Americo. "On Ethnographic Work Among Minority Groups: A Folklorist's Perspective." The New Scholar. 6. 1 977: 1-32.
- Patton, M.Q. Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods. 2nd ed. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1990.
- Philipsen, G. "Speaking Like a Man in Teamsterville: Cultural Patterns of Role Enactment in an Urban Neighborhood." Quarterly Journal of Speech. 61. 1975: 13-22.
- Pink, S. (2001). *Doing Visual Ethnography*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Reissman, C.K. Narrative Analysis. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1993.
- Roemer, Michael. Telling Stories: Postmodernism and the Invalidation of Traditional Narrative. Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 1995.
- Sanders, Robert E. "The Interpretation of Discourse." Communication Quarterly. 29. 1981: 209-217.
- Speer, Jean Haskell. "Folklore and Interpretation: Symbiosis." The Southern Speech Communication Journal. 40. 1975: 365-376.
- Spradley, P.J. The Ethnographic Interview. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1979.

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Strauss, A. and J. Corbin. Basics of Qualitative Research. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1990.

Twigg, Reginal. "The Problem of 'Serious' Fiction: Modernization and the Textual Politics of Nineteenth-Century Literary Realism and Ethnography." Text and Performance Quarterly. 14. 1994: 1-20.

Werner, Oswald and G. Mark Schoephe. Systematic Fieldwork: Foundations of Ethnography and Interviewing. Vol. 1. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1987.

Wolcott, Harry F. "Making a Study 'More Ethnographic.'" Journal of Contemporary Ethnography. 19. 1990: 44-72.